

I was the victim. I was the one he wanted to kill and so far he'd killed me seven times. I wasn't going to let him kill me again. I pulled my head away, into the latex, and brought my knee up, hard.

He doubled over. The music speeded up, as it was programmed to do after the booth had been in use for ninety seconds. The groans got louder and the red light in the ceiling started to strobe. Victor screamed and struck out wildly, knocking me off balance.

I fell against the opposite wall. I tried to pull myself up, but the more I tugged at the latex, the further down it stretched. I managed to stand up just as Victor recovered enough to lunge at me with the knife. I brought my knee up again, knocking it from his hand, and reached for the door. He grabbed my arm and pressed my face down into the latex, so I couldn't breathe. He tried to twist me around, wrapping me up like a fly in a web, but the latex sprang back into position, twirling me around so fast I was dizzy. Victor got hold of the knife again.

"Police!" I shouted. "You're under arrest!" He brought the blade down in a sweeping movement; I raised my left arm to block him and punched him in the stomach with my right. "I'm not joking, asshole. I'm a cop." I grabbed his right wrist with both hands, ramming the knife against the wall. It wasn't very effective, the blade just sank into the padding. Victor knocked me back with his left arm. I landed next to the exit button. As I reached over to press it, I heard the sound of something ripping, and then my head was encased in transparent rubber. Victor pulled it tighter and tighter; I couldn't breathe. I kicked and flailed my arms, slamming my hand desperately against the wall where I knew the button was still glowing. The piped-in music faded out, and I heard the whoosh of a sliding door. Then everything went black.

I didn't even hear the first shot, but I heard the second, or maybe it was the third. All I know is, there was something sticky and wet all over me. Then there was something heavy. The heavy thing was pulled away, and I didn't feel anything. But I heard voices. Maybe I couldn't open my eyes, but I could hear.

Castilla was screaming that she'd never shot anybody before. O'Hara was saying he couldn't believe how stupid that fucking rookie had been, going into the booth without her gun.

There was a siren, then there were more voices. "This one's dead," a voice said. "What about the girl?"

"Still breathing," said another voice. "But only just. Oh shit!" There was a sudden shower of water and disinfectant; the automatic cleaning system had come on, and whoever was talking must have got drenched. I know I did.

I was moving; I heard more sounds, more voices. "We're gonna have a lot of explaining to do," O'Hara was saying. "That goddamn rookie's really dropped us in the shit."

The air felt cooler, I was outside. "Hey, guess what?" Bruce was saying. "I just heard it over the radio. They got the slasher!"

I wanted to scream of course they got the slasher, I'm the one who got him, but I couldn't even open my mouth.

"Yeah," Bruce said, "they got him about an hour ago, in the eastern sector. Chrissie Lopez got the collar. He pulled a blade, she cuffed him, he confessed to all seven killings. That Chrissie Lopez, she's quite a cop, isn't she?"

"She's one of the best," O'Hara agreed.

I heard the ambulance doors slam, and I was driven away.

**Molly Brown** is becoming a familiar name to our readers ("Bad Timing," issue 54; "The Vengeance of Grandmother Wu," issue 61; "Angels of Darkness," issue 64; etc). From Chicago but now resident in London, she has been a cabaret comedienne, a gun-toting security guard, and all the usual dull things. What more do we have to say about her? Shall we embarrass her by reminding the world of the ecstatic way in which Maxim Jakubowski described her in his most recent *New Crimes* anthology? Perhaps not.

## FOR SALE

**Interzone: The 2nd Anthology.** Paperback edition, New English Library, 1988. Stories by J.G. Ballard, Gregory Benford, Thomas M. Disch, Garry Kilworth, Paul J. McAuley, Kim Newman, Rachel Pollack, John Shirley & Bruce Sterling, Brian Stableford, Ian Watson and others – fine tales which the *Times* described as having "the quality of going right to the edge of ideas which can chill as well as warm." It's now officially out of print, but we have obtained some remainder copies for resale to IZ readers at just over half the original cover price – **£1.75** (including postage & packing; £2.75 overseas; \$5 USA).

**Earth is the Alien Planet: J.G. Ballard's Four-Dimensional Nightmare.** A monograph by David Pringle, Borgo Press, 1979. Covers all Ballard's work from "The Violent Noon" in 1951 up to the eve of publication of *The Unlimited Dream Company* in 1979. Still in print in the USA but long hard to obtain in Britain. Now copies are available from *Interzone* at **£3.50** each (including postage & packing; £4.50 overseas; this offer not available to USA).

For either or both of these items please send a cheque or postal order for the appropriate amount to: *Interzone*, 217 Preston Drive, Brighton BN1 6FL, UK. You may also pay by Access (MasterCard) or Visa card: please send us your card-holder's name, address, card expiry date and signature.

## NEWS

# Ansible Link David Langford



Publishers don't much like losing £60,000 in legal costs and being told to get a whole series of novels out of the shops within one week. Throughout the book trade, this outcome of the Games Workshop vs. Transworld lawsuit had been thought wildly unlikely...but British law is full of surprises.

The background: Games Workshop once did an sf game called *Dark Future™* and published several tie-in books, mostly by Kim "Jack Yeovil" Newman. More recently Bantam/Transworld unknowingly launched a series of young-adult sf novels by Laurence James, with the overall title *Dark Future*. When GW discovered this they grew very stropky indeed and started making loud legal noises. (A new GW co-publishing arrangement with Box-tree was launched this January, though no *Dark Future™* titles were initially scheduled. It was thought that the game and therefore the tie-ins had been scrapped.)

There's no copyright in titles. Evelyn Waugh's novel *Men At Arms* may be famous and in copyright, but it's fine for Terry Pratchett to use the title (as he plans) for the next *Discworld* book. The trademark sign in *Dark Future™* was the trouble. British trademark protection seemingly applies only to a distinctive logo: anyone can write "IBM" but the IBM logo is strictly controlled. Since the two "Dark Future" logos looked deeply unlike, Transworld seemed safe.

This recent court session was an interlocutory hearing on GW's injunction demanding that Transworld's books be withdrawn. The trial proper, for charges of trademark infringement and "passing off," remains far distant. Meanwhile, the legal reasoning whereby the injunction was granted was unclear to laymen, being apparently based on the points (1) that a descriptive phrase can't be used as a trademark on a book; (2) that "Dark Future" is not a descriptive phrase; (3) that GW's books carry distinctive TM or (R) marks near the "Dark Future" cover logo (in fact none of them do); (4) that there would have been a trademark infringement had the books been magazines; (5) that for practical purposes magazines are the same as books (sound of dropped jaws throughout the publishing industry); and (6) that therefore there was an infringement.

It seems hard on author Laurence James, who prudently searched *Books in Print* and library databases to avoid

duplication of titles, and found no *Dark Future...* (However, the GW "Dark Future" books were reviewed during 1990-91 in publications such as *Interzone*, *Foundation*, *Vector* and *Critical Wave* – Ed.) Transworld continue to support their author and an appeal is imminent. This one will run and run.

## The Late Breakfasters

Orson Scott Card (in a recent speech) offers a sweeping critical approach to sf which I've heard writers formulate before, but perhaps never so nakedly. The thesis is that there are no bad books. Therefore there should be no bad reviews. "Those critics who are condemning other people's work are really saying 'I don't understand why people like this. I don't understand why the writer wrote this. I don't get it.'" Any bad review merely indicates a dumb critic who didn't get it. You thought you were a disappointed reader who was short-changed by some lazy, lacklustre sf novel (not, to be fair, that Card himself writes such)? No, you're just dumb. Sorry about that, Mr Clute.

Neil Gaiman, alias Mr Cool, is rarely seen without dark glasses. So I was charmed by the Aussie report of how he was persuaded to give a reading in a strangely dim place where, once he removed his shades to see the text, cameras began to pop with mysterious synchronicity...

William Gibson's sf fan past returns to haunt him despite his vast fame: New York editor David Hartwell wickedly sends xeroxes from a 1963 sf news fanzine (*Fanac*) containing real Gibson cartoons and even a convention masquerade report featuring "young Bill Gibson as a priest of the Beetle God." Ho ho.

Christopher Priest popped up in an *Observer* piece with his glum memories of the Best Young British Writers promotion he featured in long ago. In the same article Julian Barnes commented: "Priest always was a chippy bugger"...leading to serious Priestly thoughts that his unsold book on the horrors of modern publishing could be retitled *Chippy Bugger*, with the Barnes quotation paraded on the jacket.

David Wingrove published a *Daily Telegraph* article explaining that poor reviews of his legendary *Chung Kuo* sf series have a wicked common cause! "Long before this over-the-top editorial

appeared [in the BSFA magazine *Vector*], I had been singled out by the British science fiction field for a sin which, for many, went beyond that of the pornographer. I was politically incorrect." Though well calculated to appeal to *Telegraph* readers, this seems slightly revisionist: early bad reviews of *Chung Kuo*, when not going on irrelevantly about its vast and eccentric launch publicity, seemed to be calling it not so much politically incorrect as, er, stylistically challenged. But anyone publishing a poor review can expect a letter of passionate disagreement from Susan Oudot, the author's wife and (now) publicity agent...

## Infinitely Improbable

The Science Museum's Xmas/New Year "Science Fiction, Science Fact" programme was an exciting challenge for speakers Brian Stableford, Jack Cohen, John Gribbin, me, etc... thanks to audiences composed chiefly of small kids and parents taking the opportunity to sit down for a bit.

A Bum Steer is what an informant called my recent mention of *Tomorrow*, the sf magazine published by Pulphouse. "Algis Budrys, who has purchased the new magazine from the ailing Pulphouse, is 'bought up for two years'."

*Club of the Crabs!* You gaped at the quondam Brian Aldiss fan club, you goggled at the Jacqueline Lichtenberg Appreciation Society...now a publicity pack for the new Guy N. Smith Fan Club has stirred my very bowels. Thrilling Smith memorabilia are offered – "Wow, you should see those clockwork crabs clicking and shambling, if you've read any of Guy's Crabs series, then it's all really happening and you'll run a mile!" The newsletter spares us the Ultimate Horror of how much it costs: enquiries to 59 Meriden Ave, Wollaston, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 4QR.

Your Neighbour May Be A Space Alien: this traditional tabloid story has resurfaced in the USA, with "theoretical biologist Dr Thomas Easton" telling how to spot hidden extraterrestrials in our very midst by their aberrant behaviour. Aberrations include experiencing discomfort on Earth transportation, and compulsively buying Earth books, magazines, computers...*Interzone* staff and subscribers can shortly expect a visit from Men in Black.